

Contributions

THE EFFICIENCY OF THE CHURCH. No. 2

L. A. HAZLETT

We wish to pen a word and emphasize the great need of co-operation, for we believe nothing will bring the church to a higher state of efficiency than co-operation. Says Josiah Strong, "A very remarkable preacher may draw a full house, even tho his members do not lift a finger. But the average preacher can not be a very remarkable preacher, and most of the world's work in every walk of life is done by average people." Now the average preacher cannot fill the pews alone. It can be done by the co-operation of his members. Do not understand me to say that filling the church pews is the end sought of itself, however desirable this is. But if we expect the church to prosper and souls saved, they must be brought in contact with the preached word.

We do not expect early to evangelize the world when a conspicuous absence of the sinner as well as the one who professes that "Jesus' name the sweetest ever heard," is found in so many of our churches. I know of more than one preacher who has been instrumental in doing a mighty work for God, for the simple reason that he has received the co-operation of his members as a whole. And on the other hand I know of others who have been lost to the church, buried in ignominy and shame—why? A lack of co-operation upon the part of the congregation he was trying to serve; and perhaps of the two, the latter deserved success from the point of natural ability and qualifications than the former. You gave the former the helping hand, the encouraging word, when his sermon lifted you to higher aspirations. When he was weak or erred you upheld his hands and strengthened him. Co-operation in that you have a full congregation, active service of every member, that there is a service to be rendered by the individual member that no one else can do.

If a given number of active Christians do a certain amount of good, manifestly twice as many of the same sort would accomplish twice as much. But this is not all. The word says that "one shall chase a thousand and two put" not two thousand but "ten thousand to flight." There is a cumulative power in numbers greater than the numerical increase. One hundred Christians ought to be able to accomplish far more than twice as much as fifty and will, if they properly co-operate. But how may we hope to have co-operation in the various departments of church work?

1. Have that confidence in one another that each is striving to save souls.
2. That each one feel an intense in-

terest in the church and is willing to sacrifice for her promotions.

3. Seek for the presence of the Master in all services.

4. Pray a great deal for charity—love, and in your prayers forget not your pastor. The apostle Paul in writing to Timothy says, "Finally, brethren, pray for us that the word of the Lord may have free course and be glorified." If Paul needed the prayers of the brethren, surely God's ministry in these last days of the nineteenth century have not gotten above the needs of prayer. May the Spirit of God so fill us, that we all may feel the burden of souls resting upon us, and do something for the Master. Nappanee, Ind.

SOMETHING SURE

LAURA SLOTTER

When we become soured at times by disappointments of various kinds, we are apt to stop and say: "Well there just isn't anything *sure* in this world."

This morning as I threw the last leaf of the calendar for the year '98 away, I thought: every leaf and number has at last fulfilled its mission.

What a lesson of patience: In God's own appointed time the end will surely come—the end of disappointments to the disappointed, the end of toiling to the toiler, and so on until all the weary ones shall be at rest.

And when shall all this come to pass? Rest assured, dear reader, that it will be ere you can truthfully say of yourself: I am one hundred years old. In this you will not be disappointed.

Our days are consumed by the years, even as we cast each succeeding calendar aside, and when this shall have occurred three score and ten times, the promise of long life will have been fulfilled.

Comparatively few reach that age, yet many because of aged ancestors seem to feel entitled to the boon of long life.

However, of this they cannot be sure.

Occasionally, and for wise reasons, no doubt, God allows one here and one there to live on up into the nineties, and we begin to think: How strange! Will they never die as others do? But wait just a little longer and the story will be "The spirit has returned to God who gave it."

During my recent visit to the east (Ohio), among my acquaintances I met three of those very aged mothers. One said: "Next May I'll be 89 years old. But then I don't expect to live that long. If I should, I wonder if anybody will send me a present. I promised to write her a letter at that time; which seemed to please her very much.

She has been sitting in her chair, in the same room, for twelve or more years, yet always seemed very patient and cheerful, until now she wants to go and be at rest.

Another of them, tho somewhat older is not so feeble, and spends most of her time when alone, reading the Scriptures. I think she wants to make amends for having neglected that duty when younger, by reading the Bible through, as often as possible, yet while she lives. They all seem to know that they have outlived their usefulness. I noticed the vacant, lustreless look of their eyes, and thought: soon they'll be closed in death. I believe they all, if asked to do so, would voice the sentiments of him who wrote, "Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth, while the evil days came not, nor the years draw nigh, when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them."

Those youthful days will soon enough be gone, and if misspent, will cause much sorrow and many regrets which combined with the infirmities of old age, will entail much uneasiness and suffering which might have been avoided. Time is steadily urging us on, and we'll get there sure, tho there may yet be several years (calendars) for us to use up. Moment after moment glides away never to return, and each brings us just that much nearer our journey's end. When we start on a journey of two or three thousand miles we look at the car wheels and think of the many, many revolutions which they will be required to make; and yet in that steady, persistent, simple way lies our hope of reaching our destination.

And now as we enter upon the threshold of another year let us pray: Oh Lord, teach us to so number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom.

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LOVE OR CHARITY

GEO. A. RUFF

Love is the branch thrown by our Father's hand into life's bitter waters, by which they become as sweet as honey to the taste. Love is the elevator of life's valleys, and the leveler of its mountains. Love is the favorite daughter of the skies, who in one moment ravishes the heart of a single seraph with her charms, and in the next makes an Eden in a hovel for some earth imprisoned saint. Love is the golden sunlight of the eternal throne whose molten waves run unchecked to the very gates of endless night.

Love is heaven's gravitation, both exerted and recognized by the souls of all the blest, and responding evermore to its fountain in the bosom of our God. The adaptiveness and effect of this principle are wonderful. Let it be infused into my soul, and what a change. She accompanies her Master to the cross, St. Paul in his wanderings, St. John to Patmos, the martyrs to the stake, and the arena. And the only prayer she